

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 ASMARA 00677 121248Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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FM AMCONSUL ASMARA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3493

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 0677

EXDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (CORRECTION PARA 4)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS ET

SUBJECT: CISCO TWO - POSSIBLE RELEASE IN SUDAN

1. I LEARNED THIS MORNING THAT VERY DISCREET NEGOTIATIONS, THROUGH INTERMEDIARY, FOR RELEASE OF CISCO TWO BEGAN APPROXIMATELY THREE WEEKS AGO BY CISCO OPERATIONS MANAGER (OM) DOUGLAS MCALLISTER, WHO DID NOT WISH INVOLVE CONGEN OR USG AT THAT TIME, BUT HAS NOW INFORMED ME OF HIS ACTIVITIES AS HE BELIEVES INFORMATION HE HAS IS CREDIBLE.

2. INITIAL INFORMATION, ALTHOUGH UNCONFIRMED, INDICATED THAT CISCO TWO HAD BEEN TAKEN FOR SUSPECTED ACTIVITIES AGAINST THE ELF. IT WAS BELIEVED THAT CISCO TWO HAD BEEN HELPING EPMG FORCES LOOK FOR ELF RADIO TRANSMITTERS IN ASMARA. EXPLANATIONS OF TRUE CISCO TWO ACTIVITIES WERE MADE TO INTERMEDIARY, AND HE WAS ASKED TO PASS THIS INFORMATION TO ELF STATING AT SAME TIME THAT CISCO TWO WERE IN NO WAY INVOLVED IN ANY ACTIVITIES FOR EPMG. APPROXIMATELY ONE WEEK AGO INTERMEDIARY WAS ABLE TO CONFIRM PREVIOUS INFORMATION AND DETERMINE THAT CISCO TWO THEN LOCATED NEAR DORFO, APPROXIMATELY 15 KM NORTHEAST OF ASMARA.

3. INTERMEDIARY INDICATED THAT ELF CONTACT WOULD PROVIDE WRITTEN PROOF OF POSSESSION OF CISCO TWO IN FORM OF LETTER FROM ONE OF THEM ALONG WITH LETTER FROM ELF DELINEATING REASONS FOR
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ABDUCTION AND REQUIREMENTS FOR RELEASE. THIS LETTER WAS TO

BE AVAILABLE TO MCALLISTER ON 9 AUGUST 1975. INTERMEDIARY INDICATED THAT LETTER WOULD DEMAND US \$200,000 FOR RELEASE OF CISCO TWO. HOWEVER, WHEN MCALLISTER AGAIN CONTACTED INTERMEDIARY ON 9 AUGUST, HE WAS TOLD THAT CISCO TWO (STATUS OF FOUR ETHIOPIAN ABDUCTEES UNKNOWN) HAD DEPARTED DORFO VIA LAND ROVER AT 1100 HOURS LOCAL ON 9 AUGUST FOR SOME POINT IN SAHIL, THE REMOTE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION TO THE NORTH OF ASMARA, LARGELY UNDER CONTROL OF THE ELF. FROM SAHIL THEY ARE TO BE TRANSPORTED TO THE SUDANESE BORDER AND RELEASED WITHOUT PAYMENT OF RANSOM. CISCO TWO HAD, EVIDENTLY, PERSUADED CAPTORS THAT SUSPICIONS RE THEIR ACTIVITIES UNFOUNDED. INTERMEDIARY BELIEVES, BUT IS NOT SURE, THAT RELEASE WILL TAKE PLACE IN KASSALA.

4. COMMENT: FOREGOING PROVIDES MOST CONSISTENT AND BELIEVABLE RATIONALE YET FOR KIDNAPPING. INDICATED INTENTION KIDNAPPERS TO RELEASE CISCO TWO IN KASSALA FOLLOWS ALREADY ESTABLISHED PATTERN. IT WILL BE RECALLED THAT SIMILAR PRECEDENCE WAS FOLLOWED WITH TENNECO ABDUCTEES. WE CAN ONLY WAIT AND SEE WHETHER CISCO TWO SURFACE IN THE SUDAN. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER CAPTORS CAN MANAGE TO DRIVE A LAND ROVER NORTH THROUGH THE CIRTUALLY TRACKLESS SAHIL AND THEN BACK DOWN TO KASSALA. RECOURSE TO CAMELS, AS IN TENNECO CASE, WOULD BE LIKELY. IN ANY EVENT, I REQUEST THAT THIS INFORMATION BE CLOSELY HELD AND IN PARTICULAR NOT YET BE REVEALED IN ANY WAY TO EPMG. AT SOME POINT THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROBABLY BE TOLD OF POSSIBILITY THAT RELEASE MIGHT TAKE PLACE IN KASSALA. HOWEVER, IT COULD BE SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE CISCO TWO ARRIVE THERE. WE, OF COURSE, HAVE NO WAY OF CONFIRMING ANY OF THIS. WE CAN ONLY RELY ON MCALLISTER'S CONVICTION THAT INTERMEDIARY IS TRUSTWORTHY AND THAT HE HAS BEEN GIVEN ACCURATE INFORMATION BY ELF. IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN NO RPT NO DIRECT CONTACTS BETWEEN ELF AND ANY AMERICANS ON THIS QUESTION. SHERRY

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Message Attributes

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